

CITY OF SUNNYVALE PARKS DIVISION 730-7506

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

STUDY ISSUES PROCESS

PURPOSE

The study issues process is a system that provides City Council with the opportunity to annually identify new projects/issues for study, review scheduled reports and activities and establish priorities for the upcoming calendar year. These projects/issues are referred to as "Study Issues." Study issues generally pertain to topics that require staff study and are eventually placed on the Council agenda for action. They may include items such as policy studies, proposed ordinances or General Plan Issues. The basic premise of the system is to anticipate what the year's collective Council agendas will look like. The items scheduled for Council action are placed on a "Study Calendar." While it is impossible to anticipate all the issues that will be considered on the Study Calendar, the process is designed to facilitate proactive, focused issue identification.

PROCESS

Councilmembers, Commissioners, staff, community groups and the general public may propose study issues; however, Council will not consider an issue unless it has been endorsed by a Councilmember, a Commission or Board (not just one member) or staff. **Issues may be raised at any time**, though many are generated through the agendaing of the Study Issues process in Fall of each year.

Boards and Commissions identify and make recommendations to Council on potential study issues during their September/October meetings, and City Council conducts a public hearing in November to allow the public to address Council on these issues or to ask for the inclusion of additional items. In December of each year, City Council participates in an interactive workshop to identify priorities for Council, Boards/Commissions and staff study for the upcoming calendar year. The Study Issues Workshop allows for consideration of the issues all at one time, such that priorities can be effectively planned for the upcoming calendar year.

Once an issue is formally proposed staff prepares a brief "Study Issue Paper" that summarizes what would be entailed in conducting such a study. These papers are then organized by the department that would be responsible for conducting the study if it were to be approved. At the Study Issues Workshop Council reviews the issues for each department and first determines whether any of them should be dropped from the upcoming year's departmental list. Council then ranks each department's list of issues in priority order, since it is often not possible for a department to complete all proposed Study Issues. Many of the lower priority issues may not be included in a department's final work plan due to limits of staff time and other resources. Lower priority issues will be automatically reconsidered the following year by Boards/Commissions and by Council at its Study Issue Workshop.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITIES

Individuals may appear before the relevant Board or Commission at any time during the year to request a new Study Issue. If the Board/Commission agrees to consider the idea further, staff will generate a Study Issue write-up to be brought to the Board/Commission in the Fall of that year. It is only during this Fall discussion and ranking process that an issue's relative merits will be discussed by the Commission, with an opportunity for input by the public. As part of the ranking process, the Board/Commission may decide to drop the issue from further consideration, in which case it will not be forwarded to Council. Alternatively, the Board/Commission will give the proposed Study Issue a priority ranking for Council's consideration in December.

It is incumbent on interested parties to monitor Board/Commission and Council calendars and agendas carefully so as not to miss limited windows of opportunity to speak regarding Study Issues.
